

Autism

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Autism is a disorder of neural development characterized by impaired social interaction and communication, and by restricted and repetitive behavior. These signs all begin before a child is three years old.^[1] Autism affects information processing in the brain by altering how nerve cells and their synapses connect and organize; how this occurs is not well understood.^[2] It is one of three recognized disorders in the autism spectrum (ASDs), the other two being Asperger syndrome, which lacks delays in cognitive development and language, and Pervasive Developmental Disorder-Not Otherwise Specified (commonly abbreviated as PDD-NOS), which is diagnosed when the full set of criteria for autism or Asperger syndrome are not met.^[3]

Autism has a strong genetic basis, although the genetics of autism are complex and it is unclear whether ASD is explained more by rare mutations, or by rare combinations of common genetic variants.^[4] In rare cases, autism is strongly associated with agents that cause birth defects.^[5] Controversies surround other proposed environmental causes, such as heavy metals,

Autism

Classification and external resources



Repetitively stacking or lining up objects is a behavior occasionally associated with individuals with autism.

ICD-10	F84.0 (http://apps.who.int/classifications/apps/icd/icd10online/?gf80.htm+f840)
ICD-9	299.00
OMIM	209850 (http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/omim/209850)
DiseasesDB	1142 (http://www.diseasesdatabase.com/ddb1142.htm)
MedlinePlus	001526 (http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/001526.htm)
eMedicine	med/3202 (http://www.emedicine.com/med/topic3202.htm) ped/180 (http://www.emedicine.com/ped/topic180.htm#)
MeSH	D001321 (http://www.nlm.nih.gov/cgi/mesh/2010/MB_cgi?field=uid&term=D001321)
GeneReviews	Autism overview (http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/bookshelf/br.fcgi?book=gene&part=autism-overview)